



County of Los Angeles
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

713 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-1101
<http://cao.co.la.ca.us>

DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

March 30, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

SACRAMENTO UPDATE

Pursuit of County Position on Legislation

AB 1982 (Bass), as amended on March 23, 2006, would extend eligibility for the Kinship Guardian Assistance Payment (Kin-Gap) Program to wards of the juvenile delinquency court, in addition to currently eligible dependent children of the juvenile court. Under existing law, the Kin-Gap Program provides financial assistance equal to the foster care rate for children under 18 years of age who are dependents of the juvenile court, are placed with relative caretakers, have a kinship guardianship established under a permanent plan, and have had their dependency dismissed. The purpose of the program is to increase the number of children who leave foster care and enter into permanent living arrangements with a relative by providing funds to these families to encourage family preservation and stability. AB 1982 would authorize the participation of children similarly situated who are on probation as wards of the juvenile court under the delinquency provisions of State law.

According to data compiled by the Social Services Research Center, throughout the State there were 239 children on probation and placed with relatives as of July of 2005. The number who might meet Kin-Gap requirements is likely to be fewer, since some may not have guardianships established. A recent Assembly Human Services Committee analysis reports that the average payment per child under Kin-Gap is \$515.65, and for CalWORKs, the average payment per person is \$214.41. Federal TANF dollars fund about two-thirds of the costs of these benefits, and the State and

counties share equally in the remainder. The additional cost of providing Kin-Gap benefits would be offset by savings to counties and the State due to the end of supervised probation and juvenile court jurisdiction.

The Probation Department indicates that there are 150 children on probation in Los Angeles County that are in long-term, stable placements with relatives established under the permanent plan for the child. With legal guardianship granted to the relative, government intervention in family life is no longer needed or appropriate and could be eliminated by extending eligibility for Kin-Gap to these children. The Probation Department recommends that the County support AB 1982 because it will help achieve the goals of family preservation and stability for wards of the juvenile delinquency court, and we concur. Consistent with existing policy to support legislation to extend Kin-Gap benefits to Probation youth, **our Sacramento advocates will support AB 1982.**

AB 1982 is sponsored by the Chief Probation Officers of California and supported by the California Catholic Conference of Bishops. There is no registered opposition. It passed the Assembly Human Services Committee on March 22, 2006 by a vote of 6 to 0, and is now awaiting a hearing in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2161 (Hancock), as amended on March 27, 2006, would establish the Unified Resource Families Assessment Pilot Project in five volunteer counties selected by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The pilot project would merge multiple, duplicative processes for licensing and approving relatives, foster families and adoptive parents who care for abused and neglected children.

Under existing law, foster care givers are segmented into three groups; relatives, foster family providers, and adoptive homes. While all givers must meet the same health and safety standards, the process for each can vary. For example, all relatives and foster parents must undergo a second, subsequent criminal background check to become adoptive parents. This is despite the fact that many foster parents choose to adopt the same foster children they have cared for, often for many years. In addition, assessment, training, licensing approval and renewal requirements differ for each foster care giver.

AB 2161 would require the CDSS, in consultation with county welfare agencies, foster parent associations and other community stakeholders, to develop and implement a pilot program to establish a unified, child-centered resource family approval process to replace the current multiple process for licensing foster homes, approving relative and non-relative extended family members as foster care providers, and approve adoptive families. The pilot project would improve safety, permanence and well-being of children by allowing families to become licensed or approved as foster parents and also being approved as adoptive parents through one single, unified process rather than the multiple steps that are currently required. This seamless process would also expedite a plan for permanency, minimize the need for placement changes if reunification is not

possible and will keep the best interests of the foster child at the forefront during the placement and decision making process.

The Department of Children and Family Services recommends that the County support AB 2161 because it would help recruit qualified foster and adoptive parents, ensure that children are safe and well cared for, and promote permanency, and we concur. Consistent with existing Board policy to support proposals to simplify foster care program eligibility requirements and enhance permanency for children by streamlining and consolidating the separate studies and criminal clearances to caregivers for licensure, approval, and adoption, **our Sacramento advocates will support AB 2161.**

AB 2161 is co-sponsored by the County Welfare Directors Association. It is supported by the California State Association of Counties. Currently, there is no registered opposition to the bill. AB 2161 is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Human Services Committee on April 4, 2006.

AB 2193 (Bass and Cohn), as amended on March 28, 2006, would establish a new child welfare budget methodology to implement the caseload relief recommendations of the SB 2030 Child Welfare Workload Study. SB 2030, which was enacted in 1998, directed CDSS to commission a study of workload standards in child welfare. The study recommended both minimal and optimal caseload budgeting standards for child welfare services. The study findings revealed that California's workload was roughly double the recommended minimum standards.

AB 2193 would require the State to budget the child welfare program to meet the following optimal caseload standards recommended in the study:

Screening, hotline and intake:	one worker per 68.70 children
Emergency response:	one worker per 9.88 children
Family maintenance:	one worker per 10.15 children
Family reunification:	one worker per 11.94 children
Permanency planning:	one worker per 16.42 children

The budgeting standard would be implemented incrementally over a five-year period beginning in FY 2006-07 with full implementation by FY 2010-11.

AB 2193 would also require counties to develop a plan, in consultation with parents of children receiving child welfare services, consumers, child advocacy organizations and social worker organizations, for the use of the additional funds to provide social workers with additional time or support to enhance casework and outcomes for children and families.

Current child welfare caseloads are based on standards that were devised over 20 years ago. High caseloads make it difficult for child welfare social workers to meet

the current statutory requirements and mandates. Workload reductions would enhance the ability of social workers to provide vital services to children and families in our child welfare system and continue the commitment to the outcomes of safety, permanence and well-being. The Department of Children and Family Services recommends that the County support AB 2193, and we concur. Consistent with existing Board policy to support proposals to ensure full funding for child welfare services, including increased funding to cover all mandated services pursuant to the SB 2030 Workload Study and the fully loaded costs of a social worker, **our Sacramento advocates will support AB 2193.**

AB 2193 is co-sponsored by the County Welfare Directors Association, the California State Association of Counties, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, the National Association of Social Workers, and the Services Employees International Union. Currently, there is no registered opposition to the bill. AB 2193 is scheduled for hearing in the Assembly Human Services Committee on April 4, 2006.

Status of County-Interest Legislation

County-supported AB 2240 (Committee), which authorizes the Boards of Supervisors in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Counties to extend to non-contributory retirement plan employees the same opportunity to purchase additional retirement time as that which exists for contributory plan employees, was approved by the Assembly Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security Committee on its consent calendar on Wednesday, March 29, 2006. Only Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Counties have non-contributory retirement plans. The measure proceeds to the Assembly floor, with a vote expected next week.

County-sponsored AB 2961 (Nuñez), which would enhance CalWORKs benefits for homeless CalWORKs families and assistance for CalWORKs families at imminent risk of becoming homeless, was amended on March 27, 2006 to provide limited, short-term housing assistance as work support to participants engaged in Welfare-to-Work activities. The work support would be available for a period of 12 months when a county determines that housing instability threatens a CalWORKs participant's ability to secure or retain a job. The work support would be based on the size of the family and paid directly to the participant's landlord, property manager, or other appropriate entity. CalWORKs participants who are sanctioned for non-compliance with Welfare-to-Work requirements would not be eligible for work support. AB 2961 is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Human Services Committee on April 4, 2006.

County-sponsored SB 699 (Soto), which would change California's HIV reporting system from code-based to name-based, passed the Assembly on March 30, 2006 by a vote of 67 to 0, and it now returns to the Senate for concurrence in Assembly amendments.

County-supported SB 1421 (Margett), which would establish a two-year pilot project in Los Angeles County to identify, investigate, and seek prosecution of suspected cases of fraud in the Stage 2 and Stage 3 CalWORKs Child Care programs, was amended on March 27, 2006. As amended, the bill would: 1) require the California Department of Education (CDE) to consult with the Department of Public Social Services, the Los Angeles County District Attorney, and the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles to develop a plan to establish the pilot project by August 1, 2007; 2) require the plan to include criteria for conducting investigations of suspected fraud and whether investigations would be conducted by CDE or under contract with another agency, restitution guidelines, criteria to determine which cases will be referred to the District Attorney, and mechanisms for data collection and report outcomes; 3) require the pilot project to begin no later than October 1, 2007; 4) require CDE to submit a report to the Legislature on the pilot outcomes within 90 days of its completion, or no later than January 1, 2010; and 5) specify that implementation of the pilot project is subject to an appropriation of funds in the Annual Budget Act. SB 1421 passed the Senate Human Services Committee on March 28, 2006 by a vote of 4 to 0, and now proceeds to the Senate Education Committee.

County-supported SB 1520 (Ducheny), which would clarify that the five University of California academic medical centers and Los Angeles County's five public hospitals are treated as a system rather than on a facility specific basis for the purposes of allocating Medicaid dollars under the Waiver, to the extent that payments do not exceed the sum of individual hospital payments, passed the Senate Health Committee on March 29, 2006 by a vote of 7 to 0, and it now proceeds to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

We will continue to keep you advised.

DEJ:GK
MAL:JF:IGR:cc

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist
Local 660
Coalition of County Unions
California Contract Cities Association
Independent Cities Association
League of California Cities
City Managers Associations